

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-36 are pending in the application. Claims 1 and 24 have been amended.

The allowance of claims 10, 14 and 21-23 subject to being rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims is noted with appreciation.

Claims 1-9, 11-13, 19, 20, 24, 25 and 30-33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Logsdon (US 4,865,072) in view of Geary (US 6,155,286). According to the Examiner, Logsdon (Fig. 4) discloses the claimed invention except for the recitation of the removable (*i.e.*, tighten to form a seal and untighten to remove) valve inserts and test caps. For these claim features, the Examiner relies on Geary, contending that it would have been obvious to modify the washing machine outlet box inserts and test cap of Logsdon such that the inserts and test cap are removable as taught by Geary to improve the ease of assembly and disassembly of the washing machine outlet box.

However, it is respectfully submitted that to combine the teachings of Logsdon and Geary in the manner suggested by the Examiner would be directly contrary to the teachings of Logsdon and therefore not obvious, in that Logsdon teaches the perceived advantages of providing three aligned knockout plugs 30 in the bottom of the box to permit any one of them to be knocked out to provide any one of a right hand, left hand or center drain arrangement. The other two larger knockout plugs 30 are left in place, but the two smaller plugs 34 are knocked out from the two remaining larger plugs to accommodate the hot and cold water supply lines (column 3, lines 31-52). Thus it is

respectfully submitted that there is no teaching, suggestion or motivation for combining these references in the manner suggested by the Examiner.

Further, the test cap of Geary is solvent welded in the drain opening and includes a central knockout portion 92 that is removed after completion of the pressure testing (column 6, lines 28-42). In neither of these references are the test caps removable for reuse. In contrast, claim 1 recites in addition to the two valve inserts that are selectively insertable into at least one of the openings to provide valve mounts for hot and cold water shutoff valves, a test cap including means for sealing off another opening during turning of the test cap in a tightening direction after inserting the test cap into the other opening, and being turnable in an untightening direction for removal of the test cap from the other opening. Accordingly, claim 1 is submitted as clearly allowable.

Claims 2-9, 11-13 and 20 depend from claim 1 and are submitted as allowable for substantially the same reasons. Moreover, claims 2-4 and 9 further patentably distinguish over the cited references by reciting that one of the test cap and bottom wall has at least one tab that is insertable through a notch in the other of the test cap and bottom wall for engagement with the other of the test cap and bottom wall upon turning the test cap in a tightening direction to secure the test cap in place. Also claims 3 and 4 additionally recite that the other of the test cap and bottom wall has a ramp that is engageable by the tab during turning of the test cap in a tightening direction to force the test cap into sealing engagement with the bottom wall radially outwardly of the notch, and claim 4 additionally recites means for forming a fluid seal between the test cap and

bottom wall radially outwardly of the notch during turning of the test cap in the tightening direction.

Claim 20 further patentably distinguishes over the cited references by reciting a snap lock connection between the valve mount inserts and an edge of the openings in which the valve mount inserts are inserted.

Claim 19 depends from claim 14 which the Examiner has already indicated is allowable, whereby claim 19 is also allowable.

Claim 24 recites two valve mount inserts joined together in spaced relation that are selectively insertable into different openings in the bottom wall of a washing machine outlet box as a unit to provide valve mounts for hot and cold water shutoff valves, and means for selectively securing the two valve mount inserts in the openings as a unit. No such selectively insertable, joined valve mount inserts are disclosed or suggested in the cited references. Accordingly, claim 24 is also submitted as clearly allowable.

Claim 25 also recites two valve mount inserts joined together in spaced relation similar to claim 24. In addition, claim 25 recites that the spacing between the two joined valve mount inserts is such that the two joined valve mount inserts are insertable as a unit into either one of two other openings in the bottom wall of the washing machine outlet box and a center opening located equidistant between the two other openings to provide valve mounts for hot and cold water shutoff valves, in a manner clearly nowhere disclosed or suggested in the cited references. Accordingly, claim 25 is submitted as clearly allowable.

Claims 30-33 depend from claim 25 and are submitted as allowable for substantially the same reasons. Moreover, at least claim 31 further patentably distinguishes over the cited references by reciting a snap lock connection between the two joined valve mount inserts and an edge of the openings in which the two joined valve mount inserts are inserted.

Claims 15-18, 26-29 and 34-36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Logsdon in view of Geary and further in view of Fig. 3 of Kopp et al (US 6,148,850). According to the Examiner, it would have been obvious to make the inserts of Logsdon modified in view of Geary on a common "flange" valve assembly as taught by Kopp et al in order to allow ease of assembly. However, the basis for this rejection is not understood, since Kopp shows a rectangular pedestal 46 integral with the bottom wall 34 for mounting the hot and cold water shutoff valves 16 thereon, not two valve mount inserts joined together in spaced relation a distance corresponding to the spacing between the center opening and two other openings in the bottom wall of a washing machine outlet box for insertion in the center opening and either one of the two openings as a unit as recited in these claims. In fact, claims 15-18 (as well as claim 19 discussed previously) are dependent on claim 14 which the Examiner has already indicated to be allowable. Also claims 26-29 and 34-36 depend from claim 25 which is similar in scope to claim 14. Accordingly, claims 15-18, 26-29 and 34-36 are submitted as allowable for substantially the same reasons.

In addition, claims 34-36 recite that the housing has a top wall containing at least one opening to allow the box to be mounted upside down with the bottom wall at the top and the top wall at the bottom for top mounting of the two joined valve mount inserts

inside the box and for connecting a drain pipe to the opening in the top wall instead of the opening in the bottom wall in which neither of the two joined valve mount inserts is inserted, similar to allowable claims 21-23. Accordingly, these claims are further submitted as allowable.

For at least the foregoing reasons, this application is believed to be in condition for final allowance of all of the pending claims 1-36, and early action to that end is earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner disagree with applicant's attorney in any respect, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner telephone applicant's attorney in an effort to resolve such differences.

In the event an extension of time is necessary, this should be considered a petition for such an extension. If required, fees are enclosed for the extension of time and/or for the presentation of new and/or amended claims. In the event any additional fees are due in connection with the filing of this reply, the Commissioner is authorized to charge those fees to our Deposit Account No. 18-0988 (Attorney Docket OATYP0133US).

Respectfully submitted,

RENNER, OTTO, BOISSELLE & SKLAR, LLP

By 

Donald L. Otto
Registration No. 22,125

1621 Euclid Avenue, 19th Floor
Cleveland, Ohio 44115-2191
Telephone: 216-621-1113
Facsimile: 216-621-6165

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